

## The Ladder of Rivers: the Story of I. P. (Print) Olive

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the contemporary confrontation between urban American ethnic groups, (Polish Americans) and blacks and of efforts on the part of Polish Americans such as Wytrwal to find bases for cooperation rather than confrontation. *Polish-Black Encounters* is an informative and readable study which provides valuable insights for the general reader as well as for the specialist historian.

LORAS COLLEGE

JOAN S. SKURNOWICZ

*The Ladder of Rivers: The Story of I. P. (Print) Olive*, by Harry E. Chrisman. Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1983. 426 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$18.95 cloth.

Print Olive was a cattleman in the early days of trailing longhorns from Texas to Kansas and Nebraska. His father, Jim Olive, hunted and penned wild cattle north of Austin before the Civil War, and Print and his brothers grew up with the business. After returning from the war, Print became a cowhunter in earnest because trailing cattle offered financial opportunity when there was little else for Texas veterans to do. In addition, as Chrisman points out, Print had always had a fierce desire to be a man with money, with cattle, and with position in his family and his community. Well researched and readable, *Ladder of Rivers* is thus an important account of pioneer business enterprise in Texas. The Ohio University Press is to be commended for reprinting the book as an attractive Swallow Press hardbound.

*Ladder of Rivers* reveals Print and his brothers much as they probably were: hard-working, hard-drinking, moody, faithful-to-the-family men who stayed together and kept their word. Known from Texas to the northern plains as a Winchester-armed outfit, the Olives were probably typical of the cattlemen of their day, especially considering the purported extent of outlawry on the Texas frontier in the late 1860s. *The Ladder of Rivers* also presents an account of "Nigger Jim" Kelly, a black raised with the Olive brothers who was a loyal cowboy for the Olives most of his life and was just as independent, proud, and effective with a Winchester or a rope as any of the Olives.

One of Chrisman's techniques is to imagine dialogue among his characters in order to move the story along and, as he puts it, "to help telescope the events in time" (13). He is fully aware, as he explains in the foreword, that this is a questionable practice for a historian. He does, whenever possible, however, use the actual words of participants if these are part of historical record. Certainly Chrisman's

## Book Reviews

dialogue is in the spirit of what we know of the Olives and their associates. With many illustrations, explanatory notes, an appendix of cattle brands, and a brilliantly colored scene of Print and Jim among the longhorns, painted by George Phippen, *Ladder of Rivers* offers a good read for those who want to relive the drama of the old-time cattle range.

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

DAVID REMLEY

*Final Reports: Personal Reflections on Politics and History in Our Time*, by Richard Rovere. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1984. xvi, 230 pp. Index. \$16.95 cloth.

*Final Reports* is the informative memoirs of political analyst and commentator Richard Rovere (1915-1979). It presents Rovere's opinions, impressions, and memories of forty turbulent years of world history. It contains reminiscences of childhood in the 1920s in Brooklyn and Queens, New York, and meanderings through various political ideologies during the Depression years. Rovere flirted with communism for a time, working as an assistant editor at *New Masses* magazine from 1938 to 1939. He personally inspected Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs in action. He knew the inside of congressional scandals. He walked through crowds of demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago. His acquaintances included many presidents and other powerful figures, among them Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom he thought "a symbol of unity" (151), and John F. Kennedy, whom he believed "not deeply committed" (175). He also explores such personalities as Senate Majority Leader Robert A. Taft, Senator Joseph McCarthy, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Rovere measured the impact of antipoverty projects in both America and Africa. He was a respected thinker, and his reports on those trips exposed both the successes and foibles of the Kennedy generation's attempts to solve people's problems through government programs.

Rovere's reminiscences serve a twofold purpose for the historian. First, the book is part of the times that spawned it. It represents the particular opinion of an influential personality of those years. Second, *Final Reports* also brings historical names, dates, and facts to life through its author's candid descriptions and remarks on people, places, and events. Rovere viewed life from a very humane perspective and his accounts of the McCarthy Era, the Korean War, and Vietnam are colored by the characters of the participants and

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